Benefits of Community Gardening

- Helps individuals and families connect with others
- Can engage the whole family
- Strengthens youth and adult relationships
- Reduces stress
- Improves wellness through physical activity and consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Leads to reductions in family food expenses

Select Gardening Resources

Worried a green thumb is needed to start and maintain a community garden? Check out these resources aimed to make gardening accessible to all.

- Connect to local expertise and support through Cooperative Extension: www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/ www.extension.org/horticulture
- Cornell Garden-Based Learning’s how-to gardening resources, plus ideas and inspiration on garden programming to engage children, youth, and families: www.gardening.cornell.edu
- National Gardening Association offers instructions and information on gardening techniques, pest control, and more: www.garden.org

STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN:

- American Community Gardening Association: www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php
- USDA People’s Garden Initiative: www.usda.gov/peoplesgarden

For more information and resources, please visit: www.gardening.cornell.edu/military

Military OneSource: http://www.militaryonesource.mil

There is significant research to support the numerous benefits gardening can have on individual, family, and community health and well being. Here is a sampling of benefits associated with gardening that are particularly relevant to military family members. For more information and citations, please visit: www.gardening.cornell.edu/military
Gardening contributes to a healthy lifestyle through physical activity, fresh food and community involvement. Several military installations have community gardens. The management and location of established gardens varies from installation to installation. Key organizations supporting gardening on installations include:

- Child Development Centers and Youth Centers
- Installation Public Works/Civil Engineers
- Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR)
- Base Housing
- Spouse Groups

The American Community Garden Association defines a community garden as a garden that is open and accessible to people of all ages from the designated community, with individual plots assigned to specific individuals, families, or groups. [www.communitygarden.org/learn](http://www.communitygarden.org/learn)

### Garden Requirements

**SITE SELECTION:**
- Easily accessible (proximity to housing, youth center, child development facilities)
- Flat landscape
- Space for multiple plots with potential for expansion
- Minimum of 6 hours full sunlight daily
- Land use history review to identify which soil contaminate tests are needed
- Access to water suitable for food gardens
- Installation proponent responsible for all coordination

**SITE DEVELOPMENT:**

- **Prepare the Land:**
  - Remove hazards and debris
  - Till under or remove existing vegetation
  - Test soil for pH, organic matter, nutrients and potential contaminate tests are needed
  - Add needed materials to promote soil health
  - Stake out boundaries for individual garden plots
  - Construction of site plan features

- **Map the Site:**
  - Size and location of individual garden plots by number
  - Access footpaths and roadways
  - Water sources
  - Composting area
  - Tool storage (optional)

- Rainproof information bulletin board (optional)
- Border fencing or perimeter vegetation (optional)

### Establish Garden Policies for:

- Annual budget
- Plot fees
- Guidelines for assigning and reassigning plots
- Overall site maintenance
- Season start and end dates
- Condition in which gardeners must return plots
- Rules regarding children and pet access
- Materials authorized for plot boundaries
- Types of plants permitted
- Use of pesticides and fertilizers
- Maintenance of common resources (e.g. water and compost systems)
- Group or individual tool use and storage